第97話

The Horseracing Community's Blind Spot

PLAN?

TO DEFEAT NARITA BRION ...

WHAT EXACTLY IS IT ...?

IF YOU MEAN A PLAN ...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT ...?

WHA-DDYA MEAN ...

...

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

.....

...

FUFU ...

JUST GIVE IT SOME TIME ...

WE'LL TELL YA EVENT-UALLY.

RYOUHEI JUST JOINED UP WITH US TODAY ...

WE CAN'T TELL HIM ANY-THING ...

HAAA~~

GIVE IT UP ...!

EHHH ~~~ ?

I CAN'T TELL YOU TODAY ...

... THAT MUCH ...

I SWEAR, I WON'T TELL ANYONE ...

HEY, GIN-SAN ...!

PLEASE, TELL ME ...!

WHAT THE HELL ...!

INSTEAD OF THAT ...

THAT'S RIGHT.

THAT KIND OF GROUND-WORK?

YOU MEAN PREPAR-ATIONS, OR LIKE YOUR FIRST STEP...

WHEN YOU SAY GROUND-WORK ...

I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT THE GROUND-WORK WE ARE PUTTING IN PLACE.

GRO-UND-WORK ...?

HEY, RYOUHEI ...

WHICH HORSES WOULD YOU CHOOSE ...?

.....

WHAT WOULD YOUR LINEUP BE...?

IF YOU WERE ON THE OPPOSING SIDE RIGHT NOW,

AND YOU WANTED TO BRING IN THE STRONGEST 6 THOROU-GHBREDS,

RI-GHT ...

THE STRONG-EST 6...?

HERE, WRITE THEM DOWN.

HMMMM ...

I'D ALSO PUT THE MARE, SISSY AMAZON ...

AND THEN ...

AND SEKITEI TIGER...

NEXT, MARVEL-OUS TOYOTA

AYR-TON CHAMP ...

ブライオン
ベラストヨタ
セキテイタイガー
アイルトンチャンプ

FIRST OF ALL, NARITA BRION.

THAT'S RIGHT ...

WELL ...

FOR ME, IT WOULD BE THESE ONES.

IT'S TOUGH NARROWING IT DOWN TO JUST 6.

HMMM ~~

OUR OPPONENTS MOST CERTAINLY HAVE CONTROL OVER THEM.

THE 6 THAT YOU PICKED JUST NOW,

SO... THAT'S WHO IT WOULD BE.

I SEE ...

FUFU ...

HAA ...

FROM THOSE, HE'LL CHOSE A LINEUP OF 6.

THAT HE HAS UNDER HIS CONTROL.

AND WE'RE LOOKING AT AROUND 10 TOP HORSES

ADD A FEW MORE,

HE DOMINATES THE TOP OF THE HORSE-RACING COMMUNITY.

TO GO FURTHER,

THERE'S NO DOUBT.

ARE 100% SURE TO BE ON THEIR SIDE

THE 6 THAT YOU JUST CHOSE,

TO PUT PRESSURE ON THEM FROM THE TOP...

KONO USES HIS MONEY AND POWER

YOU CAN ALREADY SEE HIM PUTTING THIS INTO PRACTICE.

FOR BOTH TRAINERS AND OWNERS,

BY THAT I MEAN HE HAS THE FINAL SAY WHEN IT COMES TO DECIDING THINGS FOR THE HORSES.

YEAH ...

THE TOP ...?

HOW-EVER ...

AND THE REST OF THE TOP TEN WILL BE PRETTY TOUGH.

HAA ...

NATURALLY THOSE 6 HORSES YOU NAMED,

AS FOR OUR SIDE,

EH ...?

WILL BE WEAKENED PRETTY SOON.

I THINK THAT THE TOP TEN

WE'LL SEDUCE THAT GROUP ...

I MEAN PEOPLE LIKE STABLE-HANDS, OR STABLE JOCKEYS.

FROM BELOW THE RACING COMM-UNITY ...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "BELOW" ...?

? ...

WE'LL STRIKE FROM BELOW.

BE-LOW ...?

THE ONES WHO ARE ACTUALLY TAKING CARE OF THE HORSES EVERY DAY ...

ARE THE STABLEHANDS AND THE STABLE JOCKEYS.

WHILE THE ONES WHO HOLD THE RIGHT TO DECIDE THINGS FOR THE HORSES ARE CERTAINLY THE OWNERS AND THE TRAINERS...

...

WE'RE GOING TO BRIBE THEM.

COMPETITIONS ARE REL-ATIVE THINGS.

HAA ...

IT'LL BE EASY ENOUGH TO MAKE THE HORSES' CONDITIONS DECLINE.

IF WE CAN GET THESE GUYS ON OUR SIDE,

YOU'RE RIGHT ...

THAT, WELL ...

BUT ...

HM MM MM ...

IT WILL GIVE OUR SIDE A BETTER FIGHTING CHANCE.

THEN WE NEED TO MAKE THE OTHER SIDE POWER-LESS AS WELL...

IF OUR SIDE IS POWER-LESS,

RYOU-HEI ...

FU FU ...

IT'S A BETRAYAL. WILL IT REALLY BE THAT EASY...

WILL THAT REALLY WORK?

WORKING YOUR WAY IN FROM THE BOTTOM ...

WE'RE IN A DISAD-VANTAGED POSITION IN THE RACING WORLD,

MOST PEOPLE AREN'T GETTING ENOUGH.

IT'S NORMAL TO WANT IT.

ALL PEOPLE WANT TO BE ADMIRED.

THE HORSE.

IT NEVER REACHES THE ONES ACTUALLY LOOKING AFTER

IT ONLY GOES AS FAR AS THE TRAINER.

NO MATTER HOW MANY WINS AND PRIZES, NO MATTER HOW MUCH APPLAUSE ...

AND SO ARE THOSE STABLE-HANDS.

THE TRAINER CAN ORDER YOU TO SWITCH WITH ANOTHER JOCKEY...

JUST WHEN YOU'RE THINKING YOU CAME ACROSS A GOOD HORSE,

FROM THAT MOMENT ON, THE HORSE YOU BROUGHT UP YOURSELF

WIN-NING THEIR FIRST RACE, SECOND RACE ...

THEY TAKE CARE OF THAT HORSE FROM ITS DEBUT.

EVERY DAY, IT'S LIKE THIS.

THE SAME IS TRUE OF THE STABLE JOCKEYS.

WILL TAKE THOSE REPRESSED FRUSTRATIONS,

I...

IT'S NOT HARD TO IMAG-INE.

IS HANDED OVER TO A FAMOUS JOCKEY ...

OVER AND OVER ...

I WILL SPEAK TO THEM.

YEAH ...

OPEN ...?

AND RIP THEM OPEN ...!

I'LL ACKNOW-LEDGE THEM, PRAISE THEM ...

OF COUR-SE ...

A THOR-OUGH-BRED WINS OR LOSES ARE NOT THE FAMOUS JOCKEYS.

THE ONES WHO REALLY DECIDE WHET-HER

IT'S THEM ...

ABOUT THEIR ACHIEVE-MENTS.

ABOUT THEIR TRUE ABILITY ...

I'LL GIVE THEM A LITTLE PUSH...

BOOM... AT THE END

I MIGHT HAVE TO USE MONEY.

AT THE VERY END,

THEY WILL FALL LIKE DOM-INOS ...

THEIR UNDER-STAND-ING WILL DO IT.

IS THEIR TOTAL COMPREHENSION OF THAT "FEELING."

WHAT WILL COMP-LETE THEIR SEDUC-TION

BUT THAT WON'T BE THE DECIDING FACTOR IN WINNING THEM OVER.

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE, PEOPLE ON EVERY LEVEL ...

USING THAT METHOD,

I'VE DRAGGED THEM OVER TO MY SIDE ...

FU FU ...

UU ...

THEY CAN'T WIN WITHOUT GOOD TRAINING.

NO MATTER HOW GREAT THE HORSE IS,

EVEN NARITA BRION ...

THE HORSE IS AS GOOD AS DONE ...

ONCE THEY BET-RAY ...

WHETHER THAT HORSE LIVES OR DIES

DE-PENDS ON THEM.

THE STABLE-HANDS AND STABLE JOCKEYS ARE CRUCIAL.

AS YOU CAN SEE ...

IT WILL BE LIKE LAST YEAR AT THE KYOTO SPORTS CUP... HE'LL LOSE.

WITH-OUT PROPER REGUL-ATION,

START GIVING THE HORSE FODDER THAT HAD A LOT OF WATER,

RIGHT BEFORE A RACE... ABOUT 2 WEEKS BEFORE,

A CERTAIN HORSE, IF HE WERE TO...

FOR EXAMPLE, A STABLE-HAND LOOKING AFTER

IF THEY CUT COR-NERS,

IF THEY USUALLY DO 1400M BUT DROP TO 1000M,

OR ANO-THER WAY,

IT WOULDN'T BE IN A GOOD POSITION TO WIN.

THE JOCKEY WHO ALWAYS PRACTICES WITH IT ...

BUT ITS BODY WOULD LACK STAM-INA.

THE HORSE'S ACTUAL WEIGHT WOULDN'T CHANGE,

TO A CUTE LITTLE ANIMAL.

I WOULDN'T DO SUCH A THING

BUT ...

I WON'T USE DRUGS OR ANY-THING LIKE THAT

IN THE FINAL SPURT, HE'LL LACK THE STAM-INA.

IF HE'S A FRONT RUNNER, HE'LL START LOSING SPEED IN THE 2ND HALF.

IN AN ACTUAL RACE,

THEY WILL ENSURE THE HORSE'S PERFORMANCE IS JUST AVERAGE.

AND THUS ...

IT WOULD BE NICE IF THEY WERE JUST "HANDS OFF"

FOR ABOUT TWO WEEKS ...

that night

THANKS ...

AH ...

HAA ...

the other two had vanished

I was the only one left in the hotel room

when I woke up in the morning,

Gin-San's story ended there

ふわぁあ・

WHAT THE HELL ...

YOU GUYS COULD HAVE SAID SOME-THING.

EH ...?

We'll contact you. when the time is right...?

.....

PHEW ~~~

...

I turned it over, but there was nothing on the back.

That's all the letter said

...

In the bag

...

PHEW
--
--

I GUESS THEY'LL CONTACT ME WITH THIS
...

...

and a char ger

There was a cell phone

At that time -

I'LL MAKE HIM TELL ME HIS PLAN NO MATTER WHAT...

NEXT TIME WE MEET,

FU FU ...

WELL, I GUESS I GOTTA WAIT
...

...

Anyway, that cell phone,

Next time we meet, no more bullshit

I was actually being really naive

But ...

I was feeling carefree about it

They would contact me by then

...

Maybe a week at most.

I thought it'd be 2 or 3 days

Never rang ...

Abso lutely

Then, the disgustingly hot summer passed through

With the sound of the rain hitting the rooftops.

May came and went ...

But ...

1995

5

	1	2	3	4	5
7	8	9	10	11	12
14	15	16	17	18	19
21	22	23	24	25	26
28	29	30	31		

It still didn't ring!

...WHAT THE HELL ...?

It could still make calls.

Naturally, the cellphone wasn't broken or anything.

It all felt like a daydream.

Maybe it was a delusion sprung from my horseracing-crazed mind.

The story about the 30 billion horseracing gamble

Like this ...

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

WHY HAVEN'T THEY CONTACT-ED ME...

Lotteria ロッテリア

September --

I'd hang around this one fast food place.

Around that time ...

...

はぁ～～..

It was almost like being lovesick.

So I'd wait there and stare at the unringing phone. Sighing.

That day ...

I'd been waiting for Gin-san at that fast food joint.

And so ...

...WHAT THE HELL... HURRY UP GIN-SAN ...

Oct-ober —

ドカレカレ・・・

IT'S TIME ...!

It rang ..!

ガバッ

銀と金◆第97話◆完

TRANSLATION: TEABUN
CLEANING/TYPESETTING: HAGENOBAKA